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AIDAC STATE FOR AID/DCHA/OFDA FOR ANDREW/TOKAR, AID/E&E FOR
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SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: Disaster Declaration: Oil Spill in Kerch Strait, Russia

Refs: (A) Moscow 5372, (B) Moscow 5436

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¶1. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 4.

¶2. (SBU) The November 11 oil spill in the Kerch Strait (which runs between the Black and Azov Seas near Crimea) continues to affect large numbers of fish and wildlife and is now spreading into the Sea of Azov (refs A, B). Efforts to contain and remediate the spill have been limited by high seas and reported GOR disagreements with Ukraine over construction of a temporary dam between mainland Russia and the Ukrainian Island of Tuzla (ref B). Damages from the disaster continue to mount and U.S. emergency assistance is required to advise on a containment and remediation plan.

¶3. (SBU) Given the potential of emergency assistance to avert long-term economic and environmental damage to Sea of Azov and Black Sea, the Ambassador declares the oil spill in the Kerch Strait a disaster. He has determined that the incident is of a sufficient magnitude to warrant external assistance (ref A), the GOR has stated its willingness to accept assistance (ref B), and it is in the interests of the United States to provide such assistance.

¶4. (SBU) ACTION: Mission requests OFDA consideration and approval of up to USD 50,000 to provide short-term technical expertise to mitigate environmental and economic damages. In consultation with OFDA, Embassy proposes that these funds be used to support rapid assessment of the situation by a team from the U.S. Coast Guard or other agencies to consult with the GOR on the most appropriate response. Remaining funds are also proposed to support short-term remediation efforts of local non-governmental organizations.

BURNS